

Title: Political Activity Policy	Policy No: 3.18 Supersedes: N/A
Authority: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Legislative <input type="checkbox"/> Operational	Effective Date: July 12, 2022
Approval: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Council <input type="checkbox"/> CMT <input type="checkbox"/> General Manager	Review Date: May 26, 2030

Policy Statement:

The City of Maple Ridge is committed to maintaining political neutrality in all aspects of its operations during Elections and other voting processes. The City must ensure that its services, staff, facilities, resources, communication platforms, and public-facing activities remain impartial and are not used, or perceived to be used, to support or oppose any Candidate, Elected Official, Third Party Advertiser, Interested Party, political issue, ballot question, or Assent Voting matter. This commitment is necessary to preserve public confidence in the integrity, fairness, and transparency of the election process and in the administration of local government.

This Policy establishes a consistent framework governing the use of City Facilities and City Resources during Elections while recognizing that City Staff have the right to engage in Political Activity in their personal capacities.

Nothing in this Policy is intended to prevent an Elected Official from carrying out their official duties or representing their constituents in their elected capacity. However, those duties must be performed in a manner that does not involve Campaigning or the inappropriate use of City Facilities, City Resources, City branding, City events, or City communications channels for Election purposes.

Purpose:

1. To provide a consistent and transparent approach governing the use of City Facilities and City Resources for Political Activity during Elections and other voting processes;
2. To provide direction to Candidates, Elected Officials, Third Party Advertisers, Interested Parties, City Staff, and any person acting on their behalf regarding permitted and prohibited conduct in relation to Political Activity on City property, through City systems, and in connection with City operations.
3. To ensure that City Facilities and City Resources remain impartial and are used only for lawful and intended City purposes, including the conduct of official City business and the delivery of City services.
4. To provide City Staff with direction respecting conduct and participation in Political Activities during Working Hours; and

5. To preserve public confidence in the fairness, integrity and non-partisan administration of Elections and related voting processes.

Scope:

1. This Policy applies to Elections, as well as questions on the ballot and Assent Voting..
2. This Policy applies specifically to:
 - a) Candidates
 - b) Elected Officials
 - c) Third Party Advertisers
 - d) Interested Parties
 - e) Affiliated Persons'
 - f) Anyone acting on behalf of a Candidate, Elected Official, Third Party Advertiser, Interested Party, or Affiliated Person; and
 - g) City Staff.
3. All City Facilities that are owned and operated by the City.

1. Definitions:

“Affiliated Person” means a person who materially supports a Candidate in their Campaigning and in furtherance of electing the Candidate in an Election;

“Assent Voting” means assent voting as set out in the *Local Government Act*;

“By-Election” means a Local, Provincial, Federal or School Trustee election other than a general election;

“Candidate” means a person who is running or has publicly expressed an intention to run, for an elected office in an Election;

“Campaign Materials” means any materials used to solicit votes for a Candidate, a political issue, a question on the ballot, or Assent Voting matter, including but not limited to, flyers, signs, electronic displays, buttons, pamphlets, banners, or other paraphernalia;

“Campaigning” means any activity by or on behalf of a Candidate or political position that is intended to solicit, encourage or influence support for or opposition to a Candidate, political issue, question on the ballot, or Assent Voting matter during an Election or other voting process, including the distribution of Campaign Materials. Campaigning does not include the mere appearance of an Elected Official, potential Candidate, or other person at an event in their personal capacity where no Election-related advocacy occurs;

“Chief Election Officer” means the person appointed by the City as the Chief Election Officer under applicable legislation, or designate;

“City” means the City of Maple Ridge;

“City Facilities” means any Park, Public Place, Recreation Facility, or other building, structure, room, land, or space owned, leased, licensed, funded, operated, or controlled by the City;

“City Resources” means resources expended or acquired in furtherance of City operations including but not limited to, paid City Staff time, supplies, equipment, vehicles, tools, telephone, computers, mobile devices, printers, email accounts, mailing lists, software, data, records, photographs, videos, website, social media channels, branding, logos, crests, and any other asset or resource, excluding City Facilities, that may reasonably be associated with the City;

“City Staff” means any person employed by the City, any person assigned or retained to act on the City’s behalf, and any contractor, consultant, volunteer, or other individual who performs work or services for the City or has access to City Facilities or City Resources in connection with City business;

“Election” means a local general election for the number of persons required to fill a local government office under the *Local Government Act*, an election for a board of school trustees under the *School Act*, a provincial general election under the *Election Act*, a federal general election under the *Canada Elections Act*, or a By-Election.

“Elected Official” means an elected official of the City, including the Mayor and all members of Council;

“Election” means Local general election for the number of persons required to fill a local government office under the *Local Government Act*, an election for a board of school trustees under the *School Act*, a provincial general election under the *BC Elections Act*, a federal general election under the *Canada Elections Act*, or a By-Election;

“Interested Party” means any person seeking to influence other persons to vote for or against any Candidate, political issue, question submitted to the electors, or Assent Voting during an Election or other voting process;

“Park” means any real or personal property within the City used for public park or recreation purposes including all buildings and structures situated thereon and includes any other parcel of land improved, maintained, developed or administered by the City for public recreational or park purposes;

“Public Place” includes public buildings owned or controlled by the City to which the public is ordinarily invited or permitted access, including but not limited to City Hall, community centres, libraries, art galleries, museums, exhibition halls, fire halls, and public works yards controlled by the City;

“Recreation Facility” means a building, recreation facility or other land improvement, including but not limited to, recreation centres, public pools, arenas, sports fields, ball diamonds, gymnasiums, and other recreation facilities located in a Park or on any other land which the City owns or controlled by the City, and is intended for athletic, social or recreational use by members of the community;

“Social Media Policy” means the City’s Social Media Policy as amended or replaced from time to time;

“Third Party Advertiser” means a person, corporation, organization or group that engages in Election advertising to promote or oppose a Candidate or take a position on an issue associated with an Election or other voting process;

“Working Hours” means the regularly scheduled or assigned hours of work during which City Staff are performing duties for the City, and includes any paid time, including overtime, during which City business is being conducted.

2. Conduct Framework for City Staff

Provided that the City Staff member is not serving as an Election Official and does not hold any role or responsibilities to the Election, question on the ballot, or Assent Voting Matter:

- a. City Staff must perform their duties in a politically neutral, impartial, and professional manner.
- b. City Staff retain the right, as private citizens, to engage in lawful Political Activity outside of Working Hours and without use of City Resources, subject to their obligations as employees or service providers to the City and any other applicable law, policy, contract, or code of conduct.
- c. City Staff must avoid conduct that creates, or could reasonably create, an actual or perceived conflict between personal Political Activity and the impartial discharge of their duties.
- d. Subject to this Policy and any other applicable legal or employment obligations, City Staff may:
 - (a) participate in Political Activity outside Working Hours in a personal capacity;
 - (b) make personal political donations;
 - (c) attend political meetings or events outside Working Hours;
 - (d) display lawful political views in a personal capacity outside Working Hours, provided no City Resources are used and no City endorsement is suggested; and
 - (e) seek guidance from a supervisor, manager, Human Resources, or other designated authority where uncertainty exists.
- e. City Staff must not:
 - (a) engage in Political Activity during Working Hours;
 - (b) engage in Political Activity while wearing a City uniform, personal protective equipment bearing City identification, or any clothing or badge that identifies them as City Staff;
 - (c) wear, display, or distribute Campaign Materials during Working Hours or while using City Resources;
 - (d) use their City title, City position, authority, or influence in a manner that may lead the public to believe that the City endorses or opposes a Candidate, party, issue, question on the ballot, or Assent Voting matter;
 - (e) solicit support, distribute materials, canvas, fundraise, or promote political messages in the workplace or through City systems;
 - (f) use City Facilities or City Resources to organize, promote, or participate in Political Activity; or
 - (g) direct, pressure, or influence other City Staff in relation to Political Activity.
- f. Social Media and Public Contact
 - (a) City Staff who engage in Political Activity on social media or other public platforms outside Working Hours must ensure that they do so strictly in a

personal capacity.

- (b) City Staff must not identify themselves by City title or role, or present themselves in a manner that could reasonably suggest they are speaking on behalf of the City, when engaging in Political Activity.
 - (c) Even outside Working Hours, City Staff should exercise discretion and good judgment where personal Political Activity may reasonably affect public confidence in the City's impartiality.
- g. Employees seeking Elected Office
- (a) Any City Staff member who intends to become a Candidate must comply with all statutory requirements, employment obligations, and City policies applicable to employees seeking elected office.
 - (b) The City may require a City Staff member who becomes a Candidate to notify the City and to comply with any leave, conflict, reporting, or workplace restrictions required by law or City policy.

3. Use of City Facilities:

3.1. General Principles

- (a) City Facilities are to be used in a manner that supports official City purposes and preserves the City's political neutrality.
- (b) No person may use a City Facility in a manner that suggests City endorsement of, affiliation with, or opposition to any Candidate, Elected Official, Third Party Advertiser, Interested Party, political issue, question on the ballot, or Assent Voting matter.

Access to City Facilities must be administered fairly, consistently, and in accordance with applicable bylaws, policies, booking procedures, permits, licenses, and fees.

3.2. Campaigning

- (a) Campaigning in a Public Place or Recreational Facility is prohibited, except within a space that is available for rental to the public and that has been rented in accordance with the City's established procedures, applicable fees, and all terms and conditions of use.
- (b)
 - (b) Where Campaigning is permitted within a rented space under section 2.2(a), all Campaign Materials and Election-related activities must remain entirely within the boundaries of the rented space and must not interfere with surrounding operations, access, or public use..
- (c) Campaigning in a Park is generally permitted provided that:
 - the activity does not interfere with public access or ordinary park use;
 - the activity does not disrupt City operations or contravene any City bylaw, permit condition, or other legal requirement;

- no Campaign Materials are attached to buildings, structures, trees, signs, fences, or other improvements, and no sign or materials are driven into the ground; and
- any required rental, booking, permit, or approval has been obtained in accordance with established rental procedures and fees.

2.3 Candidates, Third Party Advertisers, Interested Parties, and persons acting on their behalf, shall not distribute or display Campaign Materials during any event, meeting, activity, or program that is organized, hosted, or 100% sponsored or funded by the City, whether the event occurs at a City Facility or elsewhere.

2.4 Candidates, Third Party Advertisers, Interested Parties, and persons acting on their behalf, shall not canvass or solicit votes, or distribute or display Campaign Materials within 100 metres of a building where voting proceedings are being conducted at the time.

4. Candidate Meetings

All-Candidates meetings may be held at City Facilities where:

- (a) The facility is available for rental for such use;
- (b) all Candidates for the applicable office are invited on equal terms;
- (c) the event complies with all applicable City procedures, fees and conditions of use; and
- (d) Campaign Materials may be displayed or distributed at such meetings only with the authority of the renter and in accordance with terms and conditions of the rental agreement.

5. Attendance at City Events

- 4.1 Elected Officials may attend City organized events or events held at a City Facility, in their official capacity as Elected Officials, and may participate in ceremonial activities, speeches, greetings, presentations, or recognitions that form part of their official role.
- 4.2 No person attending a City-organized event or an event held at a City Facility may engage in Campaigning at the event.
- 4.3 The City may impose event-specific conditions to preserve neutrality, including restrictions on speeches, materials, displays, announcements, tables, or other Election-related activity.

6. Use of City Resources:

- 5.1 City Resources must not be used, directly or indirectly, for Political Activity, Campaigning, or any other Election-related purpose, except where required by law or expressly

authorized by the City for neutral information purposes.

- 5.2 No person may use City Resources in a manner that could reasonably be perceived as providing an advantage, endorsement, or affiliation to or for any Candidate, Elected Official, Third Party Advertiser, Interested Party, political issue, question on the ballot, or Assent Voting matter.

7. City Branding

- 6.1 The City's name, crest, logo, City branded colors, wordmarks, insignia, uniforms, branded templates, official stationery, or other corporate identifiers must not be used in Campaign Materials, Election advertising, campaign websites, campaign social media, or other Election-related communications in a manner that implies endorsement by or affiliation with the City.
- 6.2 Photographs, videos, graphic materials, written materials, or other content by City Staff or using City Resources must not be used for any Election purpose or in Campaign Materials. For greater certainty, this restriction does not apply to photographs or videos taken independently by a person in publicly accessible areas, including in front of City Facilities or City signage located on public lands, provided such photographs or videos were not created by City Staff.
- 6.3 Candidates and other persons must not publish, distribute, or post photographs or videos depicting themselves:
- (a) in a City uniform;
 - (b) with City Staff who are in uniform or otherwise identifiable as acting in their City capacity; or
 - (c) in circumstances that may reasonably suggest City endorsement, support, or affiliation for an Election purpose.

8. Communications Systems and Records

- 8.1 City email accounts, telephones, voicemail, mailing lists, printers, photocopiers, websites, intranet, internal messaging systems, file storage systems, and all other City communications systems must not be used for Political Activity.
- 8.2 Candidates and Third Party Advertisers must not use email addresses, usernames, or other electronic identifiers that reference the City or otherwise imply City support, endorsement, or affiliation (ie. cmrjohnsmith@gmail.com or cityofmapleridgejohnsmith@gmail.com).
- 8.3 City records, contact information, and distribution lists must not be accessed, used compiled, or disclosed for Election-related purposes except as required by law.
- 8.4 City staff must not prepare, print, distribute, post, store, or transmit Campaign Materials using City Resources.

9. City's Social Media and Public Communications

- 9.1 During an Election period, the City may publish neutral public information relating to Election dates, voting processes, elector information, and other factual matters in accordance with applicable law and the City's Social Media Policy.
- 9.2 City communications respecting Elections must be informational, impartial, and non-partisan in tone, content, and presentation.
- 9.3 Candidates, Third Party Advertisers, Interested Parties and Elected Officials, and persons acting on their behalf must not use City social media channels, comment functions, or other City-controlled digital platforms to Campaign or to promote or oppose any Candidate, issue, question on the ballot, or Assent Voting matter.
- 9.4 The City may remove comments, posts, tags, links, or other content from City-controlled digital platforms where the content contravenes this Policy or the City's Social Media Policy.

10. Equal Access to Information:

- 10.1 The City will maintain a transparent and neutral position by providing general Election information in a fair and consistent manner.
- 10.2 The City will not provide any Candidate and Third Party Advertiser, or other person with preferential access to non-public information, staff expertise, meetings, or operational insight for Election-related purposes.

11. Role of City Staff

- a. City Staff who receive requests from Candidates, Third Party Advertisers, or persons acting on their behalf for Election-related information must refer those requests to the Chief Election Officer.
- b. City Staff may assist the Chief Election Officer with:
 - (a) Preparing and posting general factual information on the City's website or social media channels;
 - (b) Organizing general information sessions approved by the Chief Election Officer, and
 - (c) Administrative tasks necessary to support neutral Election-related communications.
- c. City staff must not arrange or participate in personal meetings, private briefings, or individual tours for Candidates or Third Party Advertisers for Election-related purposes.

12. Role of the Chief Election Officer

- a. The Chief Election Officer is responsible for coordinating the provision of general Election-related information that may provide guidance to Candidates and Third Party Advertisers.
- b. Where general information is provided, the Chief Election Officer will ensure that it is shared equally and openly through appropriate and accessible means, including the City's website, social media channels, information packages, or other communication methods consistent with the Social Media Policy.

13. Escalation to the Chief Administrative Officer

- a. If a Candidate or Third Party Advertiser requests information that would not normally be provided by the Chief Election Officer, or wishes to appeal a decision denying information, the matter may be escalated to the Chief Administrative Officer within five calendar days of the decision.
- b. The Chief Administrative Officer will determine the appropriate course of action having regard to the City's obligations of neutrality, fairness, operational capacity, confidentiality, legal requirements, and the public interest.

14. Responsibilities

- a. The Chief Election Officer is responsible for:
 - (a) administering and maintaining this Policy;
 - (b) coordinating neutral Election-related information under this Policy;
 - (c) determining, in the first instance, questions regarding the application of this Policy to requests for information, meetings, tours, and Election-related use of City Facilities; and
 - (d) directing cessation or removal of activity or materials that contravene this Policy
- b. The Chief Administrative Officer is responsible for:
 - (a) hearing escalations under this Policy;
 - (b) determining appropriate administrative responses where City Staff are involved in an alleged contravention; and
 - (c) supporting organization-wide compliance with this Policy.
- c. City Staff are responsible for:
 - (a) understanding and complying with this Policy;
 - (b) conducting themselves in a politically neutral and professional manner while performing City duties; and
 - (c) seeking guidance where they are uncertain about the application of this Policy.

15. Administration and Enforcement

- 15.1 The Chief Election Officer may take any one or more of the following steps where a person contravenes this Policy:
- (a) direct the immediate cessation of Political Activity, Campaigning, or other Election-related activity at a City Facility or involving City Resources;
 - (b) order the removal of Campaign Materials or other materials that contravene this Policy;
 - (c) cancel, suspend, or refuse a booking, permit, rental, meeting, or access arrangement;
 - (d) impose conditions on use of City Facilities to protect political neutrality; and
 - (e) refer the matter to the Chief Administrative Officer, Human Resources, bylaw enforcement, or other appropriate authority.
- 15.2 Where City Staff are involved in an alleged contravention, the matter may be referred to the Chief Administrative Officer for investigation and determination of the appropriate response, which may include administrative, disciplinary, contractual, or other corrective action, as applicable.
- 15.3 Nothing in this Policy limits the City's ability to take any other lawful step available under legislation, bylaw, contract, collective agreement, or other policy.
- 15.4 A failure by the City to enforce this Policy in one instance does not constitute a waiver of its right to enforce the Policy in another instance.


16. Related Legislation, Bylaws and Policies

This Policy is to be read and applied in conjunction with all applicable legislation, bylaws, and City policies, including but not limited to:

- *Local Government Act*;
- *School Act*;
- *Election Act*;
- *Canada Elections Act*;
- Social Media Policy;
- Council Conduct Bylaw;
- Sign Bylaw;
- Public Places, Parks and Recreation Facilities Regulation Bylaw; and
- any applicable human resources, respectful workplace, records management, communications, and code of conduct policies.

Administration:

The Chief Election Officer will administer this Policy and the Corporate Officer will maintain this

Policy.		
(Administration Only)	Signature	Date Signed
Resolution No.: R/2026-CM-113		May 27, 2026